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# *The Army's EO Program and Policies*



## Lesson 21: Racism and Sexism

# Overview

- Define Racism and Sexism
- Identify factors in development of racism and sexism
- Identify relationship of power bases
- Identify examples of racist and sexist behaviors
- Identify strategies for combating racism and sexism



# Introduction

- Racism and sexism are forms of discrimination which are very similar.
- The only real difference is that sexism is based on gender while racism is based on color.
- As we will discuss in this portion of your EOR training, the similarities far outweigh the differences.
- It has been said that when you scratch the skin of a racist, you will find a sexist just below the surface.



# Introduction

- In general, people are socialized that it's acceptable to be a little sexist, but it's not to be a little racist.
- You must understand they are both unacceptable forms of behavior and should be treated with equal importance.
- Let's discuss these two forms of discrimination and see if we reach any conclusions which would make us agree or disagree with this statement.



# Racism and Sexism

- **Racism and Sexism** - is the transformation of prejudice, based on race or gender through the exercise of power and authority against the group defined as inferior by individuals and institutions or organizations with the intentional or unintentional support of the culture.
  - Personal racism or sexism is an attitude of superiority, coupled with an act to subordinate an individual, because of their race or gender.



# Factors in Development of Racism and Sexism

- **Contact** - Contact between racial and ethnic groups is nearly as old as human life itself.
  - People have migrated from areas to new areas since the beginning.
  - These migrations were for various reasons.
    - Some occurred to escape persecution for different beliefs.
    - Others escaped because of poverty or wars.
    - Some people were forced to migrate through slavery and as indentured servants.
    - But regardless of the reasons, these migrations resulted in contacts with different cultures which might well have never happened otherwise.



# Factors in Development of Racism and Sexism

- **Social visibility** - With contact, comes social visibility. Society likes to categorize things, to include people.
- The easiest way to categorize people is through physical traits.
  - Something visual, such as skin color, names, e.g., Jewish, Hispanic, Polish, language, or other features such as folds of the eyes, are all visual traits that make categorizing people simple to do.
  - Cultural habits such as what we eat, how we prepare meals, celebrations, what utensils we use, all can play a factor in social visibility differences. It isn't uncommon for groups to take the position that "different means wrong."



# Factors in Development of Racism and Sexism

- **Unequal power** - Whoever has the power can control the limited resources and make policies to their standards. The group in control develops a feeling of superiority.
- **Ethnocentrism** - Is a belief one's own ethnic group is superior to all other groups. If this group also holds the power - likely the majority - then this belief can become even more damaging to the minority groups.





# Factors in Development of Racism and Sexism

- **Stereotypes** - We learn our stereotypes from parents, schools, peers, and the media.
  - Once individuals come in contact with others, they make first impressions, and may develop stereotypes of that particular group.
  - Stereotypes maintain prejudice.
- **Mass Media** - As a product of socialization prejudices are portrayed via the mass media.
  - Minorities are often portrayed as criminal and dysfunctional while females are portrayed as dependent on men for life support.
- **Competition** - Generally the group with the power gets the bigger piece



# Factors in Development of Racism and Sexism

- **Sex-role socialization** - This is the process by which males and females learn to display appropriate behavior for their sex.
- In learning these roles during sex-role socialization, we also acquire attitudes and values associated with these roles.
- There is also a 'historical factor.' Historians frequently omitted or distorted accomplishments of minorities and women's experiences and accomplishments.



# Personal Racist and Sexist Behaviors

- Many of the behaviors we observe, and are recipients of, on a daily basis are actually behaviors which constitute racist and sexist behaviors. Let's look at a few of these behaviors and discuss their impact on minorities and women.
- **Paternalism** - This behavior takes the form of acting 'fatherly' or over-protective of someone.
  - **Takes the form of acting fatherly or over-protective of someone**
  - **It may imply that the female can not do her job or survive without the man**



# Personal Racist and Sexist Behaviors

- **Ignoring** - This would be discounting what an individual says - not giving it credibility because they may be a minority or a female.
- **Speaking for** - Not letting a person speak for themselves.
  - When someone asks a direct question of them, interrupting and answering the question yourself.
  - In other words, you know the person can't possibly state what needs to be stated, so you take it upon yourself to answer for them.



# Personal Racist and Sexist Behaviors

- **Testimonials** - “ I am not prejudice, some of my best friends are black” or women or other minority
- **Ethnic, Racist, Sexist Jokes** - Continue to reinforce stereotypes
- **Frequent Interruptions** - Indicates that you don't take what someone is saying to be important
- **Stereotypical Language** - “ Women are just to emotional to handle the stress of this environment”



# Personal Racist and Sexist Behaviors

- **Titles and Ranks**

- Calling women or minorities by their first name and addressing majority (males) by rank
- Diminishes the importance of those called by first name

- **Denying Opportunities**

- Providing beneficial jobs to majority (blatant or indirect)

- **Dubious Supervision**

- Focusing on the problems or crimes of a particular group while ignoring the fact the majority may be doing the same things



# Factors That Support Racism And Sexism

- **Reference Groups**

- Groups or associations with like attitudes and like values, KKK, NOI, other fraternal organizations
- These reference groups enable people to associate with people that have the same attitudes as they do

- **Conformity to Norms**

- It's easier to conform to the norms than to challenge an attitude
- Rewards/punishment
- People tend to get on the bus



# Factors That Support Racism And Sexism

- **Self-Fulfilling Prophecy**

- Influence the behavior of another person by expressing our expectations of that person
- If we assume that because someone is a minority, that they can't achieve the same level of competence as the majority, that is exactly what "APPEARS" to happen

- **Pro-Sexism/Racism**

- Accommodating sexist/racist behavior by reinforcing it rather than questioning, checking, or opposing it.
- Not as common today
- Example: She doesn't want to break a nail, racist jokes about own group





# Social Problems Created by Racism and Sexism

- The following are examples of social problems created by racism and sexism:
  - **Ineffective Use of Abilities** - Think of how many more minority or female Doctor's, Scientists, Astronauts, Business People there could be without racism or sexism.
  - **Adverse Impact on National Income** - Denying people to make money reduces the amount of taxes paid. Increasing purchasing power creates a need for more consumer goods which equates to more jobs.
  - **Deviant behavior is acted out.**



# Social Problems Created by Racism and Sexism

- **Deviant Behavior Acted Out**
- **Inner Group Tensions in Community**
- **Adverse Impact on U.S. in World Affairs** - How can America criticize or sanction another country for Human Rights Violations, when the same thing is happening in our country



# Strategies for Combating Racism and Sexism

- While nothing is likely to completely eradicate racism and sexism, there are things we can do to minimize their affect

on our units.

- **Awareness**

- To make a difference in these areas, we must be aware the potential for both exist.
- We must also make a conscious effort to look for problems or problem areas in which either or both could happen.

- **Education.**

- Education will empower people to recognize behaviors related to racism and sexism. Individuals can then reflect, and check their own behaviors and attitudes.



# Strategies for Combating Racism and Sexism

- **Legislation**

- This not only refers to the 'laws of the land' relevant to racism and sexism, but also to the standards and policies implemented within your unit mandating acceptable standards of behavior.
- As leaders, we must make it known what we will and will not accept in behavior patterns from the unit members.

- **Participation.**

- This refers to taking part in activities in which you would mix with members of different races and genders.
- There are people who isolate themselves from others who are different. To do this reduces the opportunity to learn that the stereotypes held toward different groups often have no basis for truth.



# Strategies for Combating Racism and Sexism

- **Self-analyze**

- Often, one of the hardest things a person must do is to be honest with themselves.
- If we harbor prejudices and fears about other groups, it is best to be able to acknowledge that to ourselves. Only then can we figure out what steps we need to take to overcome these attitudes and beliefs we hold.

- **Acknowledging and understanding differences**

- Different does not mean BAD
- Simply accept that we are different
- Look for similarities rather than differences
- We are each different.



# Strategies for Combating Racism and Sexism

- **Commander's Responsibility**

- The commander is responsible for his or her EO program.
- He or she needs to know if there are incidents of racism or sexism in order to initiate appropriate actions.
- Working closely with EORs and EOAs, and ensuring that unit assessments are conducted regularly will assist the commander in knowing what the climate is in the unit.



# Conclusion

- During this block of instruction we have learned that racism and sexism have many similarities.
- Both can cause the mission and the unit to suffer.
- We have looked at ways to identify these two forms of discrimination and we have looked at ways to combat racism and sexism.

